

English Martyrs Catholic School

Anstey Lane, Leicester, LE4 0FJ

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good because from their starting points students make good progress in English and rapidly improving progress in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, the majority of students, including those who speak English as an additional language are making the progress that they should.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students have a strong sense of loyalty and pride in their school. Attendance is above national averages and is still improving.
- Literacy is well-developed in all subjects.
- Subject leaders are becoming increasingly accountable for the teaching and progress in their areas.
- The school is characterised by an ethos of community cohesion and care. Staff are exceptionally positive about the schools' leaders.
- The sixth form is outstanding due to consistently good or better teaching. As a result, students make exceptional progress to the next stage in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students achieve high standards in the majority of subjects with the exception of mathematics, but this is set to improve.
- Students who are eligible for government funding make less progress than other students, but this gap is narrowing.
- There are insufficient opportunities for teachers to share aspects of good teaching and leadership across subjects.
- Numeracy is not promoted as well as literacy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 39 lessons; five were jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work, particularly in mathematics, English and religious education.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, three subject leaders and two members of the Governing Body including the Chair. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- A telephone call was made to the manager of an alternative provider.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students in meetings and informally in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took into account the 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and a parental survey that had been carried out by the school.
- Inspectors took into account the 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation summary, the academy improvement plan, governing body minutes, anonymised performance management documents, records of lesson observations and records on attendance and behaviour. They looked at current data on students' achievement and records of predictions versus actual achievement from two previous years.

Inspection team

Julia Wright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deirdre Duignan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Heery

Additional Inspector

Stephen Daniels

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger-than-average size secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than found nationally. Just over half of students are from white British backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It has a Designated Specialist Provision (DSP) to support a small number of statemented students, aged 11 to 18, who are on the autistic spectrum.
- Alternative part-time placements, in a range of vocational subjects, are provided by Leicester College through the Vocational Education Support Authority (VESA), for a number of students in Year 10 and Year 11.
- The school accesses temporary provision from the Carisbrooke Learning Centre for behaviour for a small number of students.
- The school is part of the Leicester Education Improvement Partnership of secondary schools.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' achievement.
- The school is currently undergoing an extensive rebuilding programme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide greater challenge for all students, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that students, consolidate their learning and are then challenged further to achieve the highest possible grades.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that
 - numeracy is re-enforced effectively across all subjects
 - the learning of those in receipt of pupil premium funding is checked more regularly
 - there are greater opportunities for observing teaching to ensure that all teachers develop their practice so that it matches the very best in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School data, which has been internally moderated and externally checked, demonstrates that the proportion gaining a GCSE graded C or above in both English and mathematics is set to rise strongly in 2014. This is because previous turbulence in staffing for mathematics has been resolved, resulting in better teaching in this subject.
- Progress that students made in mathematics dipped sharply in 2013, partly exacerbated by changes in grade boundaries for students sitting the mathematics foundation paper in the summer series. The school recognises other issues that have contributed to this and has taken concerted action to redress them. Work in students' books and that seen in lessons confirms the good progress that students are currently making.
- Students make good progress in the majority of subjects including science and English. In 2013 they achieved less well in religious studies. Students who speak English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds also make good progress in English, largely as result of the school's emphasis on literacy.
- In 2013, students eligible for support though the pupil premium achieved about one grade less than their peers in English and about one and a quarter grades less in mathematics. These students also made less progress in these subjects than their peers in the school. Current information shows that these students are making better progress than previously with the grade difference reducing to about half for both subjects.
- In 2013, the progress of students who are disabled or have special educational needs was below national figures in mathematics and for those on school action. Internal tracking data show that this situation is set to improve in 2014. In English, these students make good progress. Students who access provision from the DSP are achieving well because of the extra specialist help that they receive.
- The school's efforts to raise standards in literacy are highly effective. Throughout Key Stage 3, students are encouraged to read in class and can talk confidently about their book choices. Teachers make good use of literacy across the curriculum. The identification and use of key words are a strong feature in the majority of lessons.
- Systems for target setting are effective and are based on clear expectations of what should be expected in relation to students' progress. Teachers are able to moderate these targets with the director of faculty and senior leaders, to ensure appropriate challenge. Teachers are making increasing use of these to inform their planning.
- Arrangements for alternative provision by Leicester College are effective. Students from Years 10 and 11 access a wide variety of vocational courses known as 'Future Pathways'. Their achievement is good and nearly two thirds of all students progress onto further education in their chosen specialism. This is largely due to good communications, effective information, advice, guidance, and rigorous monitoring of attendance and progress at their host placements.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. The requirements of the post 16 study programme are fully met. All post 16 students achieve high standards and progress exceptionally well from their starting points. A large majority progress on to university and very few do not go on to education, employment or training. This is because all teaching is good and much is outstanding.

- The most-able students make good progress in the majority of subjects apart from in mathematics and modern foreign languages. This is because in these subjects they are not always provided with sufficient challenge.
- The school has previously entered students early for GCSE mathematics and in 2013 students were offered up one resit opportunity. However, this practice was not effective in securing progress, particularly for the most-able students and has now ceased.

The quality of teaching is good

- The very large majority of teaching is good or better. Teachers know their subjects well and there is a positive climate for learning and good relationships. Teachers convey enthusiasm for their subjects and students respond accordingly.
- Teachers know their students well and plan their lessons carefully. They use skilful questioning across a range of subjects. This serves to provide challenge and deepen knowledge in most subjects.
- Teaching is universally strong in the Creative Arts. A large numbers of boys opt for dance and they participate enthusiastically as a result of inspirational teaching.
- Most teaching assistants are clear of their role and are used to good effect. In the best examples, they make a telling contribution to learning and progress. For example, when supporting a small group in mathematics, the well-qualified teaching assistant was able to consolidate students' learning about compound fractions.
- Teaching in the DSP is of high quality and permeates across the whole school provision for these students. As a result they make good progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. There are high expectations and students listen carefully to advice given about how to amend their work to improve it. They work studiously in their free time. Students' attitudes to learning are mature and similar to those which are typified in higher education.
- Marking is regular and in the best cases enables students to reflect on their learning. Most are aware of their target grades and know what they have to do to improve.
- Literacy is well developed in all subjects, but there is less emphasis on numeracy. Teachers pay careful attention to pronunciation and spelling of subject specific words. Students are expected to use correct terminology and are praised for doing so. This results in high quality dialogue both in groups and in response to the teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are delightful, welcoming visitors and treating them with respect. They make a significant contribution to the caring atmosphere in the school.
- Students' attitudes to their learning are generally very positive. They have a strong sense of loyalty and pride in their school.

- Attendance is above national rates and improving. Staff communicate well with parents when a child is absent. This results in sharply focussed monitoring and relentless intervention.
- Fixed term exclusions are reducing. A spike in year is a result of a decisive response to a specific behaviour issue.
- Students say that bullying is rare and parents agree. They have a good awareness of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and racist. They are confident that the school will deal effectively with any incidents that arise.
- Students who have been identified with specific behavioural needs are well supported. School leaders work closely with their parents to address their needs. As a result, they successfully re-engage in their learning.
- Alternative temporary provision for students with challenging behaviours at Carisbrooke also results in the large majority of students being successfully re-integrated into the main school, following the placement.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school has comprehensive systems for students' well-being and safety. This further supports the school's strong ethos of care.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding. Sixth form students are reading mentors for younger children and are employed as dinner supervisors. Their mature attitudes are a major factor in assuring that they achieve high standards.
- Students generally behave well around school. This is despite the disparate nature of the site and the extensive building work.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, ably supported by his leadership team, leads with integrity and ambition. Staff are exceptionally positive about the school and its leaders. They like working at the school and feel well-supported and inspired. This is indicative of a strong sense of community.
- Arrangements for checking the performance of teachers are well-established. Teachers' targets refer to the Teacher Standards and student achievement. It is clear that the Principal is not willing to tolerate second best. The professional development needs of all staff are identified and addressed. Additionally, all staff receive annual training in teaching English as an Additional Language.
- Curriculum leaders are part of the school improvement process and are aware of the link between teaching and the impact on student progress. Teaching and achievement in one or two subjects have been weaker than in others. Improvements are evident, but there is not yet a record of sustained improvement by which to judge the effectiveness of these particular leaders.
- The pupil premium funding is used appropriately to support the progress of this identified group of students. The school makes use of one-to-one tuition and small group intervention. There is evidence of a positive impact on the achievement of eligible students.

- The curriculum offers breadth and personalisation, including a variety of vocational courses. Some courses are offered in twilight sessions to extend further the range of courses on offer. There is an extensive range of inclusive, extra-curricular opportunities on offer with particular focus on the performing arts and sport. The school has a multi-age choir, which is due to appear on the BBC programme 'Songs of Praise.'
- The school is not isolated and draws on external support. The Principal is a member of the Leicester Education Improvement Partnership and draws on support from this partnership in a number of ways. The school also retains its school improvement partner to provide an external evaluation of the school. A teaching and learning consultant is also employed to ensure tailored support for mathematics and school improvement planning.
- The use of catch-up funding for students in Year 7 is effective. It is used to provide additional support from the Edge Hill university programme in mathematics, called 'numbers count'. It also funds the morning study group. There is clear evidence that eligible students are making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through lessons. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, students learned about the devastating effects of the Hiroshima bomb and were encouraged to express their response through Haiku poetry. Teachers take time to respond to difficult questions posed by students and are not afraid to explore issues. Students work co-operatively and have respect for the views of each other. Despite the cultural diversity of the school, there is little on display to celebrate this.
- Parents are supportive of the school and a very large majority would recommend it to others.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The procedures for the effective leadership of teaching are effective and supported by a part-time consultant for teaching, employed by the school. Standards of teaching have improved. However, there is not yet sufficient planned opportunities for all teachers, so that aspects of good and outstanding practice can be universally shared.
- Leadership of the DSP is meticulous and impacts positively on students' learning and achievement.
- The school values the support given by the local authority adviser particularly in conversations about its performance. Whilst the number of days' support is limited, he is available at the end of the telephone and provides a good sounding board for the Principal.
- The schools' checks on its performance accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses for the school. The school improvement plan demonstrates that rapid action has been taken to secure radically improved outcomes in mathematics. Governors monitor success criteria on a regular basis.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weakness of the school, including teaching. They have been involved in school improvement planning and a sub-committee is responsible for monitoring actions on the school improvement plan. They have received appropriate training and undertake their own reviews of school leadership and provision

- They are aware of their role to support and challenge the school’s senior leaders and take active opportunities to do so. They are working towards the Governor Mark, which is a kite mark that provides external evaluation of the quality of governance in a school
- Overall finance is managed effectively. Governors know about how pupil premium funding is used and its impact on achievement. They are less certain about how catch-up funding is used. Whilst Governors have not used their powers to withhold pay rises for staff, they are aware of the school systems in place to ensure that all staff are supported to improve.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120306
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	444360

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1061
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Washington
Principal	Marius Carney
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	0116 2428880
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